

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as indicate, with underlined ("___") indicating addition
strikethrough ("—") or double brackets ("[[]]") indicating deletion.

1. (Currently Amended) A master set top terminal (STT), comprising:

a first tuner tuning a television signal from a received multiplexed signal, to a first tuned television signal;

a second tuner tuning the television signal from the received multiplexed signal, into second tuned television signal;

an encoder supporting a plurality of encoding formats and coupled to the first tuner and receiving the first tuned television signal and digitally encoding the first tuned television signal having one of the encoding formats into an encoded signal having another one of the encoding formats, and further configured to operate in accordance with a parameter describing quality of the encoded signal, and further configured to automatically change the parameter ~~after a time period~~ such that the quality of the encoded signal is improved wherein the parameter change is responsive to a change in capability of the encoder to encode at the improved quality;

a transmitter coupled to the encoder and transmitting the encoded signal to a remote STT to be displayed on a first viewing device;

a receiver receiving a control signal from the remote STT corresponding to a user input;

a controller coupled to the receiver and configured to accept the control signal from the receiver and instruct the first tuner to tune to a second tuned television signal in response thereto, such that the transmitter transmits an encoding of the second tuned television signal to the remote STT for display on the first viewing device; and

a Radio Frequency (RF) driver coupled to the second tuner, the RF driver configured to facilitate transmission of an independent signal to a second viewing device, the second viewing device being different than the first viewing device.

2. (Previously Presented) The master STT as defined in claim 1, wherein the changed encoded signal is displayed at the first viewing device within two seconds from the remote STT receiving the user input.

3. (Previously Presented) The master STT as defined in claim 2, wherein the changed encoded signal is displayed at the first viewing device within a half-second from the remote STT receiving the user input.

4. (Previously Presented) The master STT as defined in claim 3, wherein the transmitter and receiver operate according to a wireline standard selected from the group consisting of HomePlug and HomePNA.

5. (Previously Presented) The master STT as defined in claim 2, wherein the transmitter and receiver operate according to a wireless standard selected from the group consisting of IEEE 802.11a, IEEE 802.11b, IEEE 802.11g, Bluetooth 2.0, HomeRF 2.0, HiperLAN/2, and Ultra-Wideband standards.

6. (Previously Presented) The master STT as defined in claim 5, wherein the video encoder uses a form of digital compression.

7. (Previously Presented) The master STT as defined in claim 6, wherein the video encoder is selected from the group consisting of Microsoft NetMeeting, Windows Media Player, and Real Player.

8. (Previously Presented) The master STT as defined in claim 6, wherein the low latency between the reception of the control signal and the transmission of the changed television signal is achieved by immediately encoding and transmitting a lower quality video signal.

9. (Previously Presented) The master STT as defined in claim 8, wherein a higher quality video signal is transmitted after a period during which the lower quality video signal is transmitted.

10. (Previously Presented) The master STT as defined in claim 9, wherein the period of lower quality video transmission allows the higher quality video signal to be encoded for transmission.

11. (Previously Presented) The master STT as defined in claim 9, wherein the encoding format is at least one of H.263, H.323, H.324, MPEG-1, low bit-rate MPEG-2, MPEG-2 or MPEG-4.

12. (Previously Presented) The master STT as defined in claim 11, wherein the encoding format is low bit-rate MPEG-2 and at least one of H.323, H.324, MPEG-1, MPEG-2 or MPEG-4.

13. (Previously Presented) The master STT as defined in claim 11, wherein the encoding format is H.263 and at least one of H.323, H.324, MPEG-1, MPEG-2 or MPEG-4.

14. (Previously Presented) The master STT as defined in claim 11, wherein the transmitted signal includes an encoding parameter enabling the remote STT to decode the transmitted signal using multiple decoding algorithms according to the encoding parameters.

15. (Previously Presented) The master STT as defined in claim 1, wherein the received multiplexed signal further comprises a program information component, and the master STT further comprises a program guide generator, receiving the program information from the received multiplexed signal and generating a program guide therefrom that can be transmitted by the transmitter upon a user request for the program guide at the remote STT.

16. (Previously Presented) The master STT as defined in claim 1, wherein the master STT further comprises an internet connection, and the transmitter is capable of transmitting content derived from the internet connection to the remote STT.

17-21. (Cancelled)

22-51. (Cancelled)

52-63. (Cancelled)

64-113. (Cancelled)

114. (Currently Amended) A master set-top terminal (STT) comprising:
a tuner configured to tune a television signal from a received multiplex signal, into a first tuned television signal;

an encoder supporting a plurality of encoding formats and configured to digitally encode the tuned television signal having one of the encoding formats into an encoded signal having another one of the encoding formats, and further configured to operate in accordance with a parameter describing quality of the encoded signal, and further configured to automatically change the parameter ~~after a time period~~ such that the quality of the encoded signal is improved wherein the parameter change is responsive to a change in capability of the encoder to encode at the improved quality;

a transmitter configured to transmit the encoded signal to a remote STT to be displayed on a viewing device; and

a controller configured to receive a control signal corresponding to a user input at the STT and configured to instruct the tuner to tune into a second tuned television signal in response thereto, such that the transmitter transmits an encoding of the second tuned television signal to the remote STT for display on the viewing device.

115. (Previously Presented) The master STT of claim 114, wherein the transmitter is further configured to transmit a decode parameter indicative of the changed parameter.

116. (Previously Presented) The master STT of claim 115, wherein the decode parameter is conveyed in a packet header.

117. (Previously Presented) The master STT of claim 115, wherein the decode parameter is conveyed in an out-of-band data packet.

118. (Previously Presented) The master STT of claim 115, wherein transmission of the decode parameter is preceded by transmission of a predetermined bit pattern.

119. (Previously Presented) The master STT of claim 114, wherein the transmitter is further configured to transmit the encoded signal simultaneously with the tuned television signal having one of the encoding formats.

120. (Previously Presented) The master STT of claim 114, wherein the one of the encoding formats and the another one of the encoding formats differ in bit rate.

121. (Previously Presented) The master STT of claim 114, wherein the one of the encoding formats and the another one of the encoding formats conform to a common standard but differ in bit rate.

122. (Previously Presented) The master STT of claim 114, wherein the encoder is configured to operate in accordance with a parameter describing quality of the encoded signal and wherein the encoder is further configured to change the parameter after a time period such that the quality of the encoded signal is improved.

123. (Previously Presented) The master STT of claim 114, wherein the encoder is configured to operate in accordance with a parameter describing quality of the encoded signal

and wherein the encoder is further configured to maintain the parameter over time to maintain the quality of the encoded signal.

124. (Previously Presented) The master STT of claim 114, wherein the television signal is an analog modulated signal.

125. (Previously Presented) The master STT of claim 114, wherein the television signal is a digitally modulated signal.

126. (Previously Presented) The master STT of claim 114, wherein the transmitter and the controller are configured to operate according to a wireline standard selected from the group consisting of HomePlug and HomePNA.

127. (Previously Presented) The master STT of claim 114, wherein the transmitter and the controller are configured to operate according to a wireless standard selected from the group consisting of IEEE 802.11a, IEEE 802.11b, IEEE 802.11g, Bluetooth 2.0, HomeRF 2.0, HiperLAN/2, and Ultra-Wideband standards.

128. (Previously Presented) The master STT of claim 114, wherein the plurality of encoding formats includes at least one of H.263, H.323, H.324, MPEG-1, low bit-rate MPEG-2, MPEG-2 or MPEG-4.

129. (Previously Presented) The master STT of claim 114, wherein the plurality of encoding formats includes low bit-rate MPEG-2 and at least one of H.323, H.324, MPEG-1, MPEG-2 or MPEG-4.

130. (Previously Presented) The master STT of claim 114, wherein the plurality of encoding formats includes H.263 and at least one of H.323, H.324, MPEG-1, MPEG-2 or MPEG-4.

131. (Currently Amended) A method implemented in a set-top terminal (STT), the method comprising:

tuning a television signal from a received multiplex signal, into a tuned television signal;
digitally encoding the tuned television signal having one of a plurality of encoding formats into an encoded signal having another one of the encoding formats, in accordance with a parameter describing quality of the encoded signal;

automatically changing the parameter to improve the quality of the encoded signal,
responsive to a change in capability to encode at the improved quality;

transmitting the encoded signal to a remote STT to be displayed on a viewing device;
receiving a control signal corresponding to a user input at the STT;
responsive to the received control signal, instructing the first tuner to change the tuned television signal; and
responsive to the change, transmitting a changed encoded signal to the remote STT for display on the viewing device.

132. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 131, further comprising:

transmitting a decode parameter indicative of the changed parameter.

133. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 132, wherein the decode parameter is conveyed in a packet header.

134. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 132, wherein the decode parameter is conveyed in an out-of-band data packet.

135. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 132, further comprising:

transmitting a predetermined bit pattern before the transmitting the decode parameter.

136. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 131, further comprising:

transmitting the encoded signal simultaneously with the tuned television signal having one of the encoding formats.

137. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 131, wherein the one of the encoding formats and the another one of the encoding formats differ in bit rate.

138. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 131, wherein the one of the encoding formats and the another one of the encoding formats conform to a common standard but differ in bit rate.

139. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 131, wherein the encoding operates in accordance with a parameter describing quality of the encoded signal, the method further comprising:

changing the parameter after a time period such that the quality of the encoded signal is improved.

140. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 131, wherein the encoding operates in accordance with a parameter describing quality of the encoded signal, the method further comprising:

maintaining the parameter over time such that the quality of the encoded signal is maintained.

141. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 131, wherein the television signal is an analog modulated signal.

142. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 131, wherein the television signal is a digitally modulated signal.

143. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 131, wherein the transmitting and the receiving operate according to a wireline standard selected from the group consisting of HomePlug and HomePNA.

144. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 131, wherein the transmitting and the receiving operate according to a wireless standard selected from the group consisting of IEEE 802.11a, IEEE 802.11b, IEEE 802.11g, Bluetooth 2.0, HomeRF 2.0, HiperLAN/2, and Ultra-Wideband standards.

145. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 131, wherein the plurality of encoding formats includes at least one of H.263, H.323, H.324, MPEG-1, low bit-rate MPEG-2, MPEG-2 or MPEG-4.

146. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 131, wherein the plurality of encoding formats includes low bit-rate MPEG-2 and at least one of H.323, H.324, MPEG-1, MPEG-2 or MPEG-4.

147. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 131, wherein the plurality of encoding formats includes H.263 and at least one of H.323, H.324, MPEG-1, MPEG-2 or MPEG-4.

148. (Currently Amended) A computer readable medium encoded with computer executable instructions operable in a set-top terminal (STT) to:

tune a television signal from a received multiplex signal, into a tuned television signal;
digitally encode the tuned television signal having one of a plurality of encoding formats into an encoded signal having another one of the encoding formats, in accordance with a parameter describing quality of the encoded signal;

automatically change the parameter ~~after a time period~~ such that the quality of the encoded signal is improved, responsive to a change in capability to encode at the improved quality; and

transmit the encoded signal to a remote STT to be displayed on a viewing device;

receive a control signal corresponding to a user input at the STT;

responsive to the received control signal, instruct the first tuner to change the tuned television signal; and

responsive to the change, transmit a changed encoded signal to the remote STT for display on the viewing device.

149. (Previously Presented) The computer readable medium of claim 148, the computer readable medium further encoded with executable instructions operable to:

transmit a decode parameter indicative of the changed parameter.

150. (Currently Amended) The computer readable medium of claim ~~432~~ 148, wherein the decode parameter is conveyed in a packet header.

151. (Currently Amended) The computer readable medium of claim ~~432~~ 148, wherein the decode parameter is conveyed in an out-of-band data packet.

152. (Previously Presented) The computer readable medium of claim 148, the computer readable medium further encoded with executable instructions operable to:

transmit a predetermined bit pattern before the transmitting the decode parameter.

153. (Previously Presented) The computer readable medium of claim 148, the computer readable medium further encoded with executable instructions operable to:

transmit the encoded signal simultaneously with the tuned television signal having one of the encoding formats.

154. (Previously Presented) The computer readable medium of claim 148, wherein the one of the encoding formats and the another one of the encoding formats differ in bit rate.

155. (Previously Presented) The computer readable medium of claim 148, wherein the one of the encoding formats and the another one of the encoding formats conform to a common standard but differ in bit rate.

156. (Previously Presented) The computer readable medium of claim 148, wherein the encoding operates in accordance with a parameter describing quality of the encoded signal, the computer readable medium further encoded with executable instructions operable to:

changing the parameter after a time period such that the quality of the encoded signal is improved.

157. (Previously Presented) The computer readable medium of claim 148, wherein the encoding operates in accordance with a parameter describing quality of the encoded signal, the computer readable medium further encoded with executable instructions operable to:

maintaining the parameter over time such that the quality of the encoded signal is maintained.

158. (Previously Presented) The computer readable medium of claim 148, wherein the television signal is an analog modulated signal.

159. (Previously Presented) The computer readable medium of claim 148, wherein the television signal is a digitally modulated signal.

160. (Previously Presented) The computer readable medium of claim 148, wherein the transmitting and the receiving operate according to a wireline standard selected from the group consisting of HomePlug and HomePNA.

161. (Previously Presented) The computer readable medium of claim 148, wherein the transmitting and the receiving operate according to a wireless standard selected from the group consisting of IEEE 802.11a, IEEE 802.11b, IEEE 802.11g, Bluetooth 2.0, HomeRF 2.0, HiperLAN/2, and Ultra-Wideband standards.

162. (Previously Presented) The computer readable medium of claim 148, wherein the plurality of encoding formats includes at least one of H.263, H.323, H.324, MPEG-1, low bit-rate MPEG-2, MPEG-2 or MPEG-4.

163. (Previously Presented) The computer readable medium of claim 148, wherein the plurality of encoding formats includes low bit-rate MPEG-2 and at least one of H.323, H.324, MPEG-1, MPEG-2 or MPEG-4.

164. (Previously Presented) The computer readable medium of claim 148, wherein the plurality of encoding formats includes H.263 and at least one of H.323, H.324, MPEG-1, MPEG-2 or MPEG-4.

165. (New) The master STT of claim 1, wherein the change in capability of the encoder to encode at the improved quality relates to buffering of the tuned television signal.

166. (New) The master STT of claim 1, wherein the change in capability of the encoder to encode at the improved quality relates to filling an output buffer in the encoder.

167. (New) The master STT of claim 1, wherein the change in capability of the encoder to encode at the improved quality relates to an output buffer threshold in the encoder.

168. (New) The master STT of claim 1, wherein the capability of the encoder to encode at the improved quality relates to a rate of encoding.

169. (New) The master STT of claim 114, wherein the change in capability of the encoder to encode at the improved quality relates to buffering of the tuned television signal.

170. (New) The master STT of claim 114, wherein the change in capability of the encoder to encode at the improved quality relates to filling an output buffer in the encoder.

171. (New) The master STT of claim 114, wherein the change in capability of the encoder to encode at the improved quality relates to an output buffer threshold in the encoder.

172. (New) The master STT of claim 114, wherein the capability of the encoder to encode at the improved quality relates to a rate of encoding.

173. (New) The method of claim 131, wherein the change in capability to encode at the improved quality relates to buffering of the tuned television signal.

174. (New) The method of claim 131, wherein the change in capability to encode at the improved quality relates to filling an output buffer in the encoder.

175. (New) The method of claim 131, wherein the change in capability to encode at the improved quality relates to an output buffer threshold in the encoder.

176. (New) The method of claim 131, wherein the capability to encode at the improved quality relates to a rate of encoding.

177. (New) The computer readable medium of claim 148, wherein the change in capability to encode at the improved quality relates to buffering of the tuned television signal.

178. (New) The computer readable medium of claim 148, wherein the change in capability to encode at the improved quality relates to filling an output buffer in the encoder.

179. (New) The computer readable medium of claim 148, wherein the change in capability to encode at the improved quality relates to an output buffer threshold in the encoder.

180. (New) The computer readable medium of claim 148, wherein the capability to encode at the improved quality relates to a rate of encoding.